United Nations A/C.5/63/SR.45

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
25 June 2009

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 45th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 18 May 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Bródi ..... (Hungary)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

Contents

Agenda item 132: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

09-34073 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 132: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/63/698 and Add.1, A/63/702 and Corr.1, A/63/703, A/63/767 and Corr.1, A/63/837 and A/63/841)

1. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller) introduced the performance report on the budget of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/63/698 and Add.1), which presented results-based budgeting frameworks for each relevant department and office, with expected accomplishments and planned and actual indicators of achievement. The General Assembly had appropriated funding of $230,509,900 for the support account, and expenditure had amounted to $222,450,800, leaving an unencumbered balance of $8,059,100, representing an implementation rate of 96.4 per cent.

2. One cause of the variance was the unspent balance in respect of post resources, attributable to recruitment delays and higher-than-budgeted vacancy rates in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management and to the suspension of recruitment of resident investigators in the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Another cause was the requirement for additional non-post resources for the provision of conference services for meetings of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment in February 2008 and for after-service health insurance payments to retirees. However, the additional requirements had been partially offset by the underutilization of resources intended to equip office space for new staff.

3. The General Assembly was invited to apply the unencumbered balance for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 to the support account requirements for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 and to apply $6,997,200, representing interest income, other income and cancellation of prior-period obligations, to the support account requirements for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

4. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 (A/63/767 and Corr.1), which amounted to $324,447,100, he said that the sum concerned was $42,045,200, or 14.9 per cent, higher than the resources approved for 2008/09. The proposed budget reflected a 20.2-per-cent increase in post requirements and a 6.3-per-cent increase in non-post requirements compared to the previous period. The reasons for the variances were given in chapters I B and IV of the report.

5. The proposed budget included resource requirements resulting from the establishment of the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the new system of administration of justice. While it also included funds for the ongoing development of enterprise information technology projects begun in 2008/09, it did not include funds for the enterprise resource planning project itself, pending the General Assembly's consideration at the sixty-fourth session of the report requested in its resolution 63/262.

6. With regard to the evolution of the support account, the Secretariat acknowledged the conclusion of the external management consultants requested to examine the issue that increased requirements for the support account had been driven by increased mission complexity and mission personnel. While recognizing the merit of the consultants' proposed new conceptual staffing model, it believed that such a change would require further effort and resources, and that its existing approach complied with the wishes of the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly.

7. However, in view of the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its report on the 2006/07 financial performance report and proposed 2008/09 budget for the support account (A/62/855), which had subsequently been endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/250, the Secretariat intended to re-justify in the proposed support account budget for 2010/11 all the staffing requirements relating to the account.

8. In addition to applying the unencumbered balance and interest income, other income and cancellation of prior-period obligations to the 2009/10 financial period, the General Assembly was invited to approve the support account requirements of $324,447,100 for 2009/10; to apply the $7,322,600 excess of the authorized level of the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund in respect of the financial period ended 30 June 2008 to the support account requirements for 2009/10; to apply

the $62,800 excess of the appropriation for the support account requirements for 2006/07 to the support account requirements for 2009/10; and to prorate the balance of $302,005,400 among the budgets of the active peacekeeping operations for the 2009/10 financial period.

9. **Mr. Le Roy** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations (A/63/702 and Corr.1), prepared in response to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/279, described how the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, particularly in the context of the "Peace operations 2010" five-year reform agenda, had been implemented. Growing demand and decreasing resources had led the Member States and the Secretariat departments concerned to ask fundamental questions about what peacekeeping operations could and could not be expected to achieve.

10. While the new structures and capacities approved by the General Assembly in resolution 61/279 had been in place by November 2008, staff movements had left some key posts vacant for the second time, particularly in the Department of Field Support. The strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/250 would be completed within six months.

11. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support had collaborated seamlessly on their interlinked mandates and shared goals, thus belying fears that the new structure might have a negative impact on unity of command and integration of effort. The Secretariat had benefited from the establishment of the Department of Field Support, with its exclusive focus on providing technical expertise and support for mission implementation, and from the fact that the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support reported directly to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations regarding all matters related to such missions.

12. Similarly, unity of command between Headquarters and the field had been maintained through the delegation of authority to Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and heads of mission for all mission components, who reported to the Secretary-General through the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. The two departments' policy on authority, command and control, issued in March 2008, had clarified arrangements for uniformed components of field operations and outlined structural relationships in field missions.

13. The benefits of the new structure had been consolidated by the establishment of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, by improvements in planning, personnel and procurement and by institutional learning and development arrangements. The two departments had paid attention to the observations and recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Advisory Committee and were developing benchmarks for the next phase of their activities. Working closely with the Department of Political Affairs, they had drafted plans setting out their functions and organization, and division of labour, to be issued as Secretary-General's bulletins.

14. The seven integrated operational teams established to provide field missions with guidance and assistance on cross-cutting issues had undergone three evaluations that had confirmed the need for flexible management by the Office of Operations in order to ensure that the teams accommodated changing mission needs and delivered the fullest support. An integrated operational team working group had developed guiding principles and a division-of-labour matrix including lines of accountability. A follow-up review would be conducted in June 2009.

15. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on the budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services under the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 (A/63/703).

16. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report (A/63/841) on the three reports of the Secretary-General just introduced, said she recognized that there had not been enough time since the General Assembly had approved the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to fully implement and assess such an in-depth organizational reform. The Advisory Committee

nevertheless noted that the significant strategic and operational benefits of the restructuring had not been clearly brought out in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/702); she hoped they would be in future reports. Furthermore, benchmarks should be developed for the objectives set out and the success of the restructuring should continue to be measured against those objectives.

17. The Advisory Committee welcomed the measures taken by the Department of Field Support to improve support functions and noted that some elements of the related strategy had been reflected in the peacekeeping budgets and support account budget for 2009/10. With regard to operational guidance and support, it looked forward to the upcoming assessment of the functioning and impact of integrated operational teams. On the issue of training, the Advisory Committee had made several recommendations in its general report on administrative and budgetary aspects of peacekeeping operations (A/63/746).

18. The Advisory Committee encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to improve the planning, guidance, management and support of peacekeeping operations, while keeping current working structures under review, in order to achieve further streamlining. The Secretary-General should be requested to continue to ensure a clear chain of command, accountability and coordination. Structural changes should allow for consolidation of past actions and the benefits of experience. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its resumed sixty-fifth session, a report substantiating the strategic and operational benefits of the restructuring, reform and business processes.

19. Turning to the performance report (A/63/698 and Add.1), she said that the Advisory Committee had emphasized the need for a specific account of actual achievements, as described in the results-based budgeting framework, and of actual expenditure, ensuring that budgetary allocations were adhered to.

20. With regard to the proposed cost estimates for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, one of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, contained in chapter III of its report, was that 106 of the 182 new posts proposed by the Secretary-General should be approved. The Advisory Committee also recommended the application for continuing posts of a vacancy rate of 12 per cent for Professional posts and 7 per cent for General Service and related posts, rather than the proposed 7 per cent and 5.2 per cent. It further recommended that the vacancy rates for new general temporary assistance positions should be adjusted to 25 per cent for Professional posts and 12.5 per cent for General Service and related posts and that the delayed deployment factor for new posts should be set at 65 per cent and 50 per cent respectively for the two categories.

21. In the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of 18 new posts for the Police Division, instead of the 26 proposed by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General had also proposed to expand and move the Standing Police Capacity to the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi. The Advisory Committee had not been provided with sufficient information to make a recommendation on that issue.

22. In the Department of Field Support, the Advisory Committee, aiming at a more realistic and gradual approach than that proposed, recommended that the general temporary assistance funding requested should be reduced from the proposed 30 to 14 positions and that additional capacity should be provided through temporary redeployment.

23. In the Office of Human Resources Management, the Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed amount of $3 million for general temporary assistance, which represented a 387-per-cent increase over the resources approved for 2008/09, mostly for support of the talent management system, should be reduced by $1 million and that the Office should be authorized to use the resources at its own discretion, taking into account the relative priority of the various projects. In addition, the Advisory Committee recommended against approval of most of the requests for general temporary assistance made for the Facilities and Commercial Services Division under the support account budget, since many of the functions concerned related to the needs of the Organization as a whole and should be provided centrally through the Office of Central Support Services under the regular budget.

24. In the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposals for internal audit, including two additional posts, and of two of the three additional posts requested to

strengthen the inspection and evaluation capacity. It also agreed with the restructuring proposals for the Investigations Division, which addressed the concerns of both the Advisory Committee and the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

25. The Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the staffing resources proposed for investigations: 43 posts to be distributed among the three regional hubs, 10 general temporary assistance positions and one post to be allocated to the three largest missions. Having been informed that OIOS intended to service the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from Nairobi, the Advisory Committee recommended that the capacity provided should continue to be monitored.

26. In the Office of Information and Communications Technology, the Advisory Committee did not consider it reasonable to request additional resources so soon after the adoption of major decisions on the related strategy, structures and programmes. For the time being, the Advisory Committee recommended against the establishment of the additional posts proposed.

27. The Advisory Committee had learned that seven general temporary assistance positions had been inadvertently excluded from the support account resources proposed for the Office of the Chief Information Technology Officer for 2009/10. The Advisory Committee recommended that the related requirements of approximately $1 million should be absorbed, as proposed, and be included in the performance report for the support account for the period 2009/10. The Advisory Committee also recommended a 5-per-cent reduction in the amount of $14 million proposed for information technology, to be used by the Office of Information and Communications Technology at its own discretion, taking into account the relative priority of the various projects.

28. In conclusion, she said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of an overall amount of $304,629,300 for the support account for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, entailing a reduction of $19,817,800 in the overall resources proposed by the Secretary-General.

29. **Ms. Ahlenius** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), introducing the OIOS report on the audit of the Secretariat's structure for managing and sustaining peacekeeping operations (A/63/837), said that it was still too early to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the recently established Department of Field Support. While the Secretary-General had established mechanisms to provide executive direction to the Secretariat departments involved in peacekeeping operations, the Secretariat had yet to develop the necessary governance and accountability mechanisms for the new structure. In particular, the Secretary-General's compact should be extended to heads of mission; the Concept of Operations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Support Plan of the Department of Field Support should be formalized; the roles and accountabilities of the Department of Field Support and each mission's support component should be clearly defined; and clear criteria and transparent decision-making mechanisms should be developed for assigning lead responsibility for special political missions to either the Department of Peacekeeping Operations or the Department of Political Affairs.

30. In the light of its findings, OIOS had made 10 recommendations aimed at strengthening governance and accountability mechanisms. Those recommendations, set out in chapter IX of its report, had all been accepted by those concerned.

31. **Mr. Abdelmannan** (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while the establishment of the Department of Field Support had led to some improvement in the support provided to peacekeeping operations, the full benefits of the restructuring remained uncertain. Structural change was not a substitute for managerial improvement. The Secretary-General must continue to make efforts to ensure unity of command, establish a clear division of labour between the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support and reduce the "silo mentality" of individual departments. The Group concurred with the Advisory Committee that benchmarks should be developed for the objectives set out in paragraphs 16 and 17 of the Secretary-General's report (A/63/702).

32. While acknowledging that peacekeeping missions had grown larger and more complex and required an adequate level of support, the Group shared the concern of the Board of Auditors that there was no defined formula to show the relationship between the level and complexity of peacekeeping operations and the level of the support account. It regretted that no comprehensive analysis of the evolution of that

account had been submitted to the General Assembly, as requested in Assembly resolution 60/268.

33. He stressed the importance attached by the Group to the proper representation within the two Departments of troop-contributing countries, most of which were developing countries. The Group was also concerned about the continuing low proportion of women from developing countries in the Secretariat, especially at senior levels. While agreeing on the importance of stability in the personnel structure, the Group urged the prompt recruitment and appointment of staff to key posts.

34. With regard to the OIOS proposal for the restructuring of the Investigations Division, the concerns expressed by the Group of 77 and China at the first part of the General Assembly's resumed sixty-second session remained valid, since that proposal entailed a fundamental change in direction for the operations of OIOS. The proposed restructuring must not be seen purely as an administrative cost-saving exercise in view of the increased caseload of financial, economic and administrative cases, due to the incorporation of Procurement Task Force cases into the Investigations Division.

35. It was also important for OIOS to maintain a transparent, predictable, accountable and objective investigative capacity that fully respected the due process rights of staff. Moreover, the proposed restructuring had implications for the peacekeeping contingents in field missions where OIOS had resident investigators, since the revised model memorandum of understanding with troop-contributing countries was likely to reduce the role of OIOS in investigations of misconduct by members of contingents. The Group would welcome clarification of the current implementation of that model and of how it would be affected by the proposed restructuring.

36. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan) said that he concurred with previous speakers that there had not yet been enough time to achieve the objectives of the restructuring of the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support. His delegation considered that, in the absence of a clear distinction between peacekeeping missions and special political missions, a logical next step would be to consolidate the duplicate functions of the two Departments and streamline outdated supporting structures in response to developments on the ground. In addition, the need for an integrated approach, as embodied in the integrated operational teams, would be better served by open-minded collaboration among the offices concerned, as well as the Department of Field Support. The follow-up assessment on the functioning and impact of integrated operational teams was therefore awaited with interest.

37. Noting that the proposed 15-per-cent increase in the support account for 2009/10 was paralleled by the increase in mission budgets and that there was no defined formula showing the relationship between the complexity of peacekeeping operations and the level of the support account, he said that the size of the backstop function should be determined on the basis of the experience of the departments concerned rather than of studies by external consultants. The utmost prudence should be exercised in determining the optimal size of the support account; efforts should be made to recruit and appoint staff promptly and to make full use of approved posts rather than seeking new ones. Requests for additional resources for the support account should be accompanied by clear statements of the goals and objectives sought.

38. **Mr. Solle** (Norway) said that the significant increase in the deployment of police officers in peacekeeping operations had not been matched by a strengthening of the Police Division in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. That had resulted in an overstretching of the Division's work capacity, insufficient Headquarters support for deployed personnel and insufficient training and recruitment at both management and staff levels, with an attendant risk to the safety of United Nations personnel in the field. His delegation was concerned that the number of additional posts proposed for the Police Division, initially set at 44 following the Police Division review, then reduced by the Secretariat to 26, then reduced by the Advisory Committee to 18, would not be enough. The Committee should maintain the number of 26 new posts for the Police Division, as suggested by the Secretariat.

39. **Mr. Prokhorov** (Russian Federation) expressed concern at the increase in the proposed 2009/10 support account budget (A/63/767 and Corr.1) relative to the level approved for 2008/09, and at the request for new posts, particularly in view of the unencumbered balance and post vacancy rates indicated in the performance report on the support account budget for 2007/08 (A/63/698). He wondered why new posts were being requested if existing posts

remained unfilled, and shared the Advisory Committee's view that requests for new posts were often not sufficiently justified, that functions regularly overlapped and that budget resources were not being used rationally.

40. Further sources of concern were the provision in the proposed 2009/10 support account budget of $1 million for consultancy services to advise on United Nations Rule of Law Indicators initiatives, a function that could be better fulfilled using internal capacity, and of some $3 million for talent management support, substantially exceeding the equivalent allocation for 2008/09. His delegation would like further information on the use of resources to fund general temporary assistance positions converted to posts.

41. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Mexico) said that he would like to request the distribution to the Member States of the external management consultants' report on the evolution of the support account. He echoed the regret voiced by other delegations that the Secretary-General had not yet provided the Member States with a comprehensive report on the matter, sharing the concerns of the Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee at the lack of a rational connection between the increase in the size and complexity of peacekeeping missions and the increase in the support account.

42. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, as the external management consultants' report on the evolution of the support account was a substantial document, it would be made available to the members of the Committee in electronic form by the following day.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.